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Three Years After The War: How Do We Stand Now?

A radio discussion over WGN and the Mutual Broadcasting System

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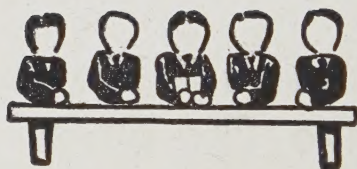
MARTIN MALONEY

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Broadcast continuously since 1934 by Northwestern University



THE REVIEWING STAND is a weekly radio forum presented by Northwestern University. The program was first broadcast by Station WGN, Chicago, October 14, 1934. It has been on the air continuously since that time, originating in the WGN studios, and, since 1935, carried by the stations of the Mutual Broadcasting System. THE REVIEWING STAND presents members of the Northwestern University faculty and distinguished guests from business, government, education, and the press in round table discussions of contemporary problems—the questions that are in the news. The program is under the direction of James H. McBurney, Dean of the School of Speech, Northwestern University; Miss Myrtle Stahl, Director of Educational Programs, WGN, Chicago; R. E. Buchanan, Director of Radio, Northwestern University; Mrs. Kathryn Johnson, Assistant to the Director; Mrs. Mary Clark, Secretarial Chief.

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Three Years After The War: How Do We Stand Now?

MR. BUCHANAN: Three years after the war . . . just how do we stand?

MR. MALONEY: We have inflation, no housing, a big Red scare, the prospect of a depression, the prospect of a third world war. I think we deserve what we are getting and what we probably will get. I think we have made our postwar world the way it is and that we will have to put up with it.

MR. BROOKMAN: Maloney, after what you have said, the only thing I see left to do is to shoot myself. I disagree in that I think we stand with an even greater appreciation and respect for our American system of free enterprise, at the same time of course, admitting that there is a lot to be desired in our handling of foreign problems and domestic issues.

MR. FRANKEL: I believe the one problem which dwarfs all the others and which actually makes impossible the solution of our domestic issues is the danger of drifting into war with Russia, a war which will benefit no one and which the vast majority of the people of all countries does not want.

* * * *

MR. BUCHANAN: The other day I overheard a conversation on a bus which ended with a very definite complaint: "If they'd let the guys who fought this war run things, we wouldn't be in such a mess."

Just what do veterans of the war—ended three years ago by the Japanese request for peace terms—think of the situation today? How does our present world compare with that they hoped they were fighting for?

Maloney, your views could hardly be classed as optimistic. Why do you say we deserve what we are getting?

'We Deserve What We Get'

MR. MALONEY: Buchanan, it seems to me that we blame the President and we blame the Congress for all our troubles. I don't think that is entirely right, although they may have made mistakes, too. We deserve what we are getting. We are the ones who agreed to drop price controls. We are the ones who engaged in black marketeering. We are the ones who demanded higher prices. We are the ones who have engaged in war talk with Russia. I think we deserve precisely what we are getting.

MR. BUCHANAN: You talk of price control and government regulation, while you, Brookman, speak of a stronger free enterprise system. Is there a conflict here?

MR. BROOKMAN: There is as far as hope goes. We may deserve all the broil we are in now, but there is always a way to overcome our problems. One answer may lie in the American system of free enterprise. During the war this system geared us quickly to supply all the fighting men with the munitions and supplies for war, and today the entire world looks to us for food, clothing, goods, and services.

MR. BUCHANAN: While thinking of a past war, I notice, Frankel, that you refer to a possible war in the future. What chance do you think we have of avoiding this war?

MR. FRANKEL: I believe, Buchanan, that a peaceful solution to this vital problem is certainly going to be difficult, but I also believe fervently that peace is a necessary prerequisite to a decent, livable world, and it must be made possible. I am aware of the great obstacles, but I also am aware of some basic premises upon which I believe a peaceful solution can be reached. The first premise is that a vast majority of the people of America and of Russia want peace desperately. The second premise is that a vast majority of the people of America and of Russia realizes the catastrophic losses to both countries that would result from a war which no one would really win.

MR. MALONEY: I am glad that you talk, Frankel, about the vast majority of people. I think the incident on the bus which Buchanan referred to is silly, if I may say so. The veterans, it seems to me, do not constitute a class. We are not a special group in this country. After all, there are veterans in Congress; there are veterans throughout the country; there are veterans in business and the professions and everywhere else. We are simply a part of a larger mass. And I think that we don't speak, we can't speak as people who happen to sit through four years of a war but rather as members of a larger society.

MR. FRANKEL: Yes, I agree with you, Maloney. There are $18\frac{3}{4}$ million veterans, 15 million of them from the Second World War, with their mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, wives, and husbands. They constitute the country. What is good for the veterans is going to be good for the country, and what is good for the country is going to be good for the veterans.

MR. BROOKMAN: There is one point where I agree with you, Maloney.

MR. MALONEY: I am glad we have one . . .

MR. BROOKMAN: . . . and I think we should speak as we do today as citizens, not alone as people having served in the war.

What About Foreign Situation?

MR. BUCHANAN: What would you say about the foreign situation? You say what is good for the country is good for the veterans. What is good for the country with regard to Russia and the prewar danger?

MR. FRANKEL: I think a peaceful solution is possible. I feel it remains for our leaders and the leaders of Russia to get together somehow, somehow to translate the vast yearning that we people have for peace into a positive and active search for peace. I think the trouble today, Buchanan, is that our approach is wrong. We take a negative, defeatist attitude. We seem to say, "War is inevitable. Peace is a delusion. Let's see what we can do to make the other country shoot at us first so that we can get into the war with a clear conscience."

MR. BROOKMAN: That may be, Frankel, but in my opinion we have to face the facts. We happen to know what our country's position may be, but as far as Russia goes, we can only judge by the way it has conducted itself since it was a wartime ally. At Potsdam we got together with the Russians for the economic unification of Germany. In the years following there has been no indication that Russia has any indication of following that. Time was on their side. Today with the Italian election, the Finland situation, Yugoslavia going national, etc., time is running out. And Russia has the blockade on Berlin. We have to judge those facts.

MR. MALONEY: I think Frankel's remarks are nice, but they are just talk. It seems to me that we are certainly getting ourselves into a war with Russia. I think undoubtedly we will go to war with the Russians eventually, but it seems to me that this has been a long process. I believe we have been easing up to this war since about 1917. I can remember only two periods in the last twenty years when we were not thinking about war with Russia, wanting war with Russia, wishing to get Russia out of the picture, seeing the Reds as a menace to our society. I think all the talk in the world isn't going to help that situation.

MR. BUCHANAN: Would you back your "talk" with some concrete action, Frankel?

MR. FRANKEL: I know only two ways in which peaceful solutions can be worked out between nations. The one is by going to war to make peace. That is the alternative of the sword. The second is the alternative of the pen, of an agreement arrived at by sitting down at a round table. I realize that this is a difficult thing to do, but I also believe that the last war is a little too close to the peoples of the world, that these peoples do not give to their leaders a mandate for war but a mandate which says, "Let's work this thing out peacefully without resorting to force."

Too Late for Conferences?

MR. MALONEY: Don't you think it is too late for mandates and conferences now?

I remember the first time I came back from the Pacific I landed in San Francisco in 1945 when they had the United Nations meeting there. It was a very cheery occasion, of course, because we were all looking forward to the brave new postwar world. And this looked tremendous. It took about two days for those people to scuttle the hopes of peace in our time. I think we might have done something then about settling the problems that exist between us and the Soviet Union, but since then I don't see much hope.

MR. BUCHANAN: How do you think they scuttled the chances for peace, Maloney?

MR. MALONEY: I think they did it because there was apparently no nation in that group which was willing to give up anything for the hope of a peaceful world. Each wanted to have his cake and eat it at the same time. Each wanted national sovereignty. Each wanted full national powers. I do not believe that there is any chance of creating a world co-ordination, a peaceful world so long as you maintain that attitude.

MR. BROOKMAN: Be that as it may, Maloney, we have a problem to master today. And if I may say so, Frankel, your hope that we get together at a table with the nations of the world is somewhat naive. The Russians have been making demands and imposing physical impositions which we have been accepting. And what matter diplomatic protests if their ends are gained? In my opinion, we need a firm stand, and we must have strength because in our weakness the Russians will flex their muscles more and go on with an expansionist policy.

MR. FRANKEL: Well, I am not one that says that everything is black or everything is white. I don't apologize for Russia. Russia has played the part of a fool and a bully. But I also feel that this country is not completely

free from guilt in the situation. I think that there are groups, minority groups, in both countries which for one reason or another are intent on pushing us into war. I think that the majority, as I have stated before, of people of both countries wants peace. I think it remains for a leader—who that leader is has not come up as yet—to translate this vast yearning into some kind of a peaceful solution.

I will be very specific. I think that the Democratic Party today is on the brink of a defeat in November. I feel that President Truman and his group should stop the bi-partisan approach in the foreign policy—a bi-partisan approach to war—and take the initiative of launching a peace offensive, of getting together with the Russian leaders and sitting down in a room or on a ship, wherever it might be. And if they have to spend three months working things out, I think they should have that mandate, they should make compromises and eventually arrive at some solution.

MR. MALONEY: Do you feel this is strictly a failure in leadership, Frankel? Do you feel it is all the fault of Truman, Marshall, Stalin, and the rest of the boys?

'People Are Not Informed'

MR. FRANKEL: I feel it is partially their fault. It is partially the fault of us people. That I will confess. But the reason is that the people are not informed about the situation. We do not understand the Russians. They do not understand us. We seem to be getting farther and farther apart.

MR. BROOKMAN: Frankel, have we not tried that system of talking at conferences many times? Still we are in a pickle today.

MR. FRANKEL: I think that we should keep trying until—or if—a war actually takes place. I see no other solution, and I am willing to push what you may consider as naive or what you may consider talk to the final conclusion in order that some possible way of avoiding a war might be found.

MR. BROOKMAN: I agree that we should strive in every way possible for peace, but I am insisting on a tightening of our firmness toward Russia now because the conferences you are interested in have not borne out your hopes. We can only judge by Russia's actions.

MR. MALONEY: I think Brookman's statement is more representative of the general feeling of people than your point of view, Frankel. And it is precisely that kind of thing that I believe will push us into war within a few years, this get-tough-with-these-boys policy. I think we had a good example of how that works out in Berlin recently. We have talked ourselves into an impasse where we almost have to "put up or shut up." In that situation you see the choice between war and peace is a fine one. Inevitably, I think, that is where your point of view takes us. We will keep getting tougher and tougher and tougher and tougher, and one day we will be sitting in Siberia, manning a final defensive line. You watch it.

MR. BROOKMAN: I don't think we have been tough at all yet. And furthermore, I think the State Department has enough know-how to know how far it can go. Certainly as we hear from Russia, there is a little weakening in the internal situation, and if there is any cause for war on our part it might precipitate one and strengthen our home front. But we can't by weakness continually let Russia run over us.

MR. FRANKEL: How can you say we are weak? We are only three years away from a great war, a war in which this country demonstrated to the world that we have the war potential second to none. We are three years away from the use of the atomic bomb, a bomb which—I think we will all agree—resides only in this country. I don't think that is weakness. And I don't think Russia interprets it as weakness. In fact, I think that Russia interprets it as strength. I believe that Russia fears our war mongering as evidenced by our newspapers each day pushing forward with headlines, "We'd better have a preventive war." Because of that fear I think that Russia has girded herself for war.

'Soviet Responsible for Problem'

MR. BROOKMAN: It may be that the Russians fear us and are goaded by that fear. But the problem still remains that strong as we may be—and I certainly believe in all our strength—we are still in a situation today which is precarious. Because of Russian fear or because of Soviet efforts at expansion, we have the problem.

MR. BUCHANAN: What do you think is going to come of the present talks in Moscow?

MR. MALONEY: Nothing, frankly. What has happened with all the talks in the last three years?

MR. BUCHANAN: Do you offer any solution, then, for this situation that you find us in?

MR. MALONEY: No, I don't. I sympathize strongly with Frankel's point of view. I think that, if there is any way under the sun of avoiding another war, we had better take it. I see this argument pretty much as Frankel and Brookman have stated it here. It seems to me that the point of view that Brookman stresses is a popular one, and I think it is going to get us into war. I think it is probably too late for the kind of discussion that Frankel offers.

MR. FRANKEL: The talks have not worked because the people of both countries don't know what they are talking about. Leaders sit around in some kind of secrecy and work out something that is supposed to be for our welfare. Woodrow Wilson said, "If you think anything is crooked, you should get it out in the open, then if it is crooked, it will either straighten itself out or disappear." I think the next time our boys sit down together with the Russians they might just as well broadcast those conferences so that we will know who is selling whom down the river.

MR. MALONEY: I think, Frankel, you charge too much of it to our leaders. Perhaps our people are relatively ill-informed on some of the problems. I am not sure that they actually are. I don't believe that this is purely and simply a failure in leadership. If the people at large knew what they wanted, if they were willing to sacrifice certain things to avoid war, the leadership inevitably would be supplied.

MR. BROOKMAN: I think the people do know what they want, and what they want is peace. Certainly the best offense is a good defense, and the people must be informed and they have been. And if that is their attitude, they are not interested in war with Russia. They are interested in peace.

MR. BUCHANAN: Frankel, however, has mentioned minorities which want war. What minorities are you talking about?

MR. FRANKEL: Remember, I said the vast majority wants peace. But there are groups, I think, who for one reason or another want war. There are religious groups which, because of the atheism of Russia, feel that the way to combat that atheism is to go to war against it. There are economic groups which have for many, many years—probably since the Russian revolution—feared the idea of communism, which see in communism a great danger to what they have. They feel that we should attack this idea at its source, which is Russia. Then there is another group, a well-intentioned group perhaps, which believes that Russia is going to make war on us soon. That group, because of this fear, says that we better hit Russia first at our time and our place rather than at their time and their place.

'Minority Wants War'

I think those groups, although they are a minority, are a very powerful minority. They represent much of the strength, much of the wealth, much of the communication media of this country. Because of their organization and because they have their objective in front of them, they are able to approach it with a lot more push and zeal than this vast mass.

MR. BUCHANAN: What of the general situation regarding domestic problems? Do they have any relation to the foreign situation? Housing, price controls, civil rights—what view does the veteran take?

MR. MALONEY: Of course, the veterans are the same as anyone in the country. The veterans were obviously out of circulation from one to five years, and when they came back they lacked housing. But outside of that, we are all in the same boat.

Now I think we do have serious domestic problems, and it seems to me—this may sound a little like Frankel—that some of our political leaders are using the big Red scare, the foreign situation, etc., to detract attention from their failure to do anything about those problems. They haven't done anything about housing to speak of. Inflation continues. Our other afflictions continue to plague us. But that is not a veterans' problem purely; it is a general one.

MR. BROOKMAN: Well, I agree that there has certainly been a lack of planning on such things as housing and, perhaps, prices. Charges are made that the Administration which pulled us into war certainly could plan for the housing and peace. Truman was there in 1945, and there were ten million men soon to return; here it is three years later, and we are still worried about the housing situation. There seems to be no planning.

On the other hand business planned. As early as 1940 with the fall of France, General Electric formed its famous V plus 2 formula, estimating the national product two years after victory day and started planning in 1940. But the government has made no plans yet.

MR. MALONEY: Just what has come as a result of all this planning in private enterprise?

MR. BROOKMAN: We have a greater national inventory, more output per worker, and many other benefits.

MR. MALONEY: More housing? Lower prices? Better living conditions?

MR. FRANKEL: I don't feel that prices are a problem brought on by any

one group. Today we have in circulation three and one-half times the money in circulation in 1940 with perhaps a little rise in our gross national product. There is no way out of high prices. I don't think any political legislation could ever remove the high prices. I think most people today are much better off than they were before, even though none of us like these high prices. We either have to produce more or we have to see that people have less money in their pockets to bid for products.

MR. MALONEY: The old boom or bust formula—or boom *and* bust.

MR. FRANKEL: I certainly feel that we are headed for a terrific bust, but whether there is anything that can be done about it politically I certainly don't know.

Veterans Face Domestic Problems

MR. BROOKMAN: We can't have low prices and the Marshall Plan, can we?

MR. MALONEY: I don't know; I doubt it very much.

MR. BUCHANAN: What about civil rights? We all had experience during the war of being in the same outfit with men of all denominations, religion, color, economic status. Maloney, do you have any hope that we are improving in tolerance?

MR. MALONEY: We are certainly not improving at the present time. Things are getting thicker and thicker. With Congress spending most of its time on witch hunts and the state legislatures twitching occasionally with eagerness to do the same thing, I don't see that we are bettering our position any . . . to understate it.

MR. FRANKEL: I feel we are not improving a great deal in the standpoint of tolerance of other people. During the war combat troops would not think of the other fellow's religion, but only of how well and how fast he could shoot. And yet, mainly because as veterans we do become a part of this country, we have thrown off a lot of the lessons we learned in tolerance.

MR. BUCHANAN: Does your free enterprise system also include more tolerance, Brookman?

MR. BROOKMAN: As far as the free enterprise system goes, certainly it includes tolerance. But the thing I am going to pick out of Maloney's statement is the "witch hunts." If he is referring to the Red spy ring investigation, I think they are good for the general edification of the whole country—and discouraging.

MR. MALONEY: We have had these things for a good many years. We had a little spell of this after the last war. Attorney-General Palmer, as I remember, used to go about snatching people up more or less illegally and throwing them into jail because he suspected them of being communist agents. His activities were discredited after the country calmed down. And I suspect that these will be.

MR. BROOKMAN: My memory doesn't go back that far, Maloney, but I know that certainly it must be discouraging to the government workers, present and future, to know that there are communists working in the government. I think the investigation has brought those to the light to the good of all the people.

MR. MALONEY: Since when has communism been such a high-powered political problem in this country? I distrust these things because we have never had any really verifiable evidence that communism has been a tremendously strong force in the United States, even in the depths of the depression when you might expect it. On the contrary, we have had all kinds of evidence that we have batches of native fascists spread all over the country. We had a country full of German agents at one time or another. Nobody ever got very excited about those boys. But we have always played up the communists, and I think it is because they make good political bait.

'Communists Threaten U. S.'

MR. BROOKMAN: The communists are the ones who are causing the war scare today. It is their expansionist policy. And as far as this government goes, we can look at the head of the Communist Party of the United States, William Foster, who says that no communist will ever be President of the United States because the government won't exist, and the government then won't be a capitalistic government, but a Soviet government. And behind this government will stand the Red Army.

MR. BUCHANAN: That seems to bring us back to the war situation again, as tied up with the domestic situation. What do you see in the future, Frankel, as far as our country is concerned?

MR. FRANKEL: I am not optimistic, but I am hopeful that some solution can be reached with Russia, and if and when this solution arises, I think that most of our domestic issues will disappear. I think the strength and the manpower and the materials that we can divert from a war industry into housing, into our gross national product, would bring down prices and remove some of the problems we have domestically.

MR. MALONEY: I am not hopeful, frankly, of solutions as a mass operation. I think in the future we will have great difficulty in surviving. I think we will survive—if we do at all—as we have in the past, as individuals in a sort of catch as can manner.

MR. BROOKMAN: Then we certainly need some good leadership to avoid these pitfalls in the future. And I know we can rely on the American system of free enterprise to provide us with the goods and steady economy.





Suggested Readings

Compiled by the Reference Department,
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BOWKER, BENJAMIN CUSHING. *Out of Uniform*. New York, Norton, 1946.

A veteran lieutenant-colonel in Army Orientation analyzes the "veteran problem."

LASCH, ROBERT. *Breaking the Building Blockade*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1946.

Concrete proposals for producing more low-cost homes.

MARTIN, RALPH G. *Best Is None Too Good*. New York, Farrar, Strauss, 1948.

Sketches of returned service men in our present postwar confusion.

MAULDIN, WILLIAM H. *Back Home*. New York, Sloane, 1947.

A thought-provoking discussion of the situations that veterans must meet. Entertaining cartoons.

American City. 63:129-30, Je., '48. "Can Incentive Taxation Solve the Housing Shortage?" E. H. SPENGLER.

Lists the good points and the shortcomings of the incentive plan.

American Mercury. 67:87-92, July, '48. "Record of Public Housing." A. F. SMITH.

Describes accomplishments in specific cities, outlines further needs, and gives practical steps in financing those needs.

American Scholar. 17 no. 1:81-92; 17 no. 2:230-6, 17 no. 3:359-61. Ap.-Jl., '48. "American Scholar Forum: American Foreign Policy." V. M. DEAN, S. K. PADOVER.

The participants present, pro and con, the merits of American foreign policy in terms of ideological conflict with Russia.

Life. 25:34-6+, Jl. 5, '48. "If We Should Have to Fight Again." C. SPAATZ. "America's top operational air-man analyzes the air lessons of the last war" and looks toward the future.

New York Times Magazine. p. 7+, Je. 13, '48. "Economic Test: Will We Act in Time?" L. H. KEYSERLING.

A long, thoughtful article on the meaning of economic stability and the needs of the United States.

U.S. News. 25:42-4, Jl. 2, '48. "Rearming U.S.: More Air Power."

A clear cut discussion of the rearmament program and what it means to various groups, i.e., youth, businessmen, etc.

U.S. News. 24:42-5, Je. 25, '48. "Marshall Plan Dollars in Action."

Lists for various countries allotments in dollars and purchases of goods for the April-June period 1948.

U.S. News. 24:22-3, Je 25, '48. "New Record Ahead in Housing."

Trends in building and the reasons for them. Interesting chart covering 1920-1948.

Vital Speeches. 14:541-4, Je. 15, '48. "Reciprocal Trade Agreements." W. S. BROWN.

The Acting Director of the Office of International Trade Policy in the Department of State, tells how reciprocal agreements work and what they do for the United States.



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